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Message Text

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51
ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SY-10 AID-20 OPR-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 EUR-25

EB-11 FAA-00 IO-13 USSS-00 NIC-01 OMB-01 PM-07 NSC-10

DRC-01 /144 W
---------- 024035
R 060615Z SEP 73
FM AMCONSUL KHORRAMSHAHR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 104
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN BY POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHORRAMSHAHR 081

BEIRUT PASS USINT BAGHDAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, IR
SUBJECT: SHOOTOUT IN ABADAN

REF: TEHRAN 6038, AUG 25, 1973

SUMMARY: KHUZISTAN PROVINCE SAVAK CHIEF'S ACCOUNT OF ABADAN SHOOTOUT SUBSTANTIALLY CONRRESPONDS WITH PRESS REPORTS OF INCIDENT AS REPORTED IN REFTEL. ACCORDING TO HIS ACCOUNT DEAD GUERILLA POSSESSED TWO RUSSIAN MANUFACTURED PISTOLS, AMMUNITION, 32 PICTURES OF UNIDENTIFIED PEOPLE AND MEMBERSHIP CARD IN PALESTINIAN ORGANIZATION. TARGET OF TERRORISTS NOT KNOWN. ALTHOUGH LOCAL OFFICIALS TEND TO PLAY DOWN INCIDENT, SECURITY MEASURES AT ABADAN AIRPORT TOUGHENED FOLLOWING SHOOTOUT. MANY QUESTIONS ABOUT INCIDENT STILL UNANSWERED IN FACT NOT COMPLETELY ESTABLISHED TERRORISTS WERE IRAQIS. AFFAIR PROBABLY AN ISOLATED INCIDENT AND NOT BEGINNING OF SYSTEMATIC TERRORIST CAMPAIGN. END SUMMARY

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1. DURING LUNCHEON CONVERSATION BRIGADIER GENERAL AMIR FARHANG

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SHAHIN,
SAVAK CHIEF FOR KHUZISTAN PROVINCE, PROVIDED ACCOUNT OF ABADAN
SHOOTOUT
WHICH SUBSTANTIALLY CORRESPONDS WITH NEWSPAPER STORIES OF INCIDENT
REPORTED IN REFTEL. ACCORDING TO SHAHIN TWO "IRAQIS" PROBABLY CROSSED
INTO IRAN EARLY MORNING AUGUST 24 AND HID SELVES IN CEMETARY ON
KHOSROWBAD ROAD NEAR ABADAN. HE CLAIMS POLICE KNEW THEY WERE THERE.
GUERILLAS SHOT AND WOUNDED POLICEMAN WHO TRIED TO FLUSH THEM OUT AND
THEN COMANDEERED PASSING CAR AND FLED INTO CROWDED SECTION OF ABADAN
WITH POLICE IN PURSUIT. IN ABADAN THEY WERE FORCED TO HALT. THEY
TRIED TO ESCAPE IN ANOTHER TAXI AND SHOT AND KILLED DRIVER WHEN
HE REFUSED TO HELP THEM. BYSTANDER WAS ABLE TO KNOCK PISTOL FROM
GUERRILLA'S HAND. FINDING THEMSELVES CORNERED ONE TERRORIST
FLED INTO CROWN AND ESCAPED. OTHER TERRORIST WAS KILLED WHEN HAND
GRENADE EXPLODED AS HE WAS TRYING TO PULL PIN WITH TEETH. SIXT-
EEN PEOPLE INJURED IN INCIDENT SERIOUSLY ENOUGH TO REQUIRE
HOSPITALIZATION.

2. ALL INJURED WERE VISITED FOLLOWING DAY BY KHUZISTAN GOVENOR-
GENERAL SALOUR. DEAD TAXI DRIVER GIVEN HERO'S FUNERAL ATTENDED
BY GOVERNOR OF ABADAN, MAYOR AND OTHER OFFICIALS. SHAHIN SAID
SHAH HAD ORDERED GOVERNMENT TO FINANCIALLY SUPPORT DEAD DRIVER'S
FAMILY.

3. SHAHIN SAID DEAD TERRORIST CARRIED MEMBERSHIP CARD IN
PALESTINIAN ORGANIZATION AND MIGHT HAVE BEEN MEMBER OF PLF.
IN ADDITION DEAD GUERILLA HAD TWO RUSSIAN MADE PISTOLS, 32
PICTURES OF INDIVIDUAL PEOPLE NONE OF WHICH SHAHIN RECOGNIZED.
HE ALSO HAD NOTES IN ARABIC ON INSIDE OF PANT'S POCKET, 39 ROUNDS
OF AMMUNITION AND MORE GRENADES. ALL THIS EVIDENCE HAS BEEN SENT
TO TEHRAN FOR ANALYSIS.

4. TARGET NOT KNOWN ALTHOUGH ACCORDING TO LOCAL RUMOR MILL PRO-
BABLY REFINERY OR AIRPORT. SHAHIN WOULD ONLY SAY THEY "INTENDED TO
KILL PEOPLE OR DESTROY THINGS". GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF KHUZISTAN AND
KHUZISTAN POLICE CHIEF IN SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS HAVE PLAYED DOWN
INCIDENT. HOWEVER, SECURITY MEASURES AT ABADAN AIRPORT WERE TOUGH-
ENED FOLLOWING SHOOTOUT. BOARDING PASSENGERS BEING GIVEN THOROUGH
SEARCH INCLUDING INSPECTION OF NECKTIE KNOTS AND CAMERAS AND FOR
FIRST TIME PASSENGERS BEING REQUIRED TO REMOVE SHOES DURING SEARCH.
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COMMENT: THERE ARE STILL A NUMBER OF UNANSWERED QUESTIONS ABOUT
THIS INCIDENT. IF POLICE OR SAVAK KNEW GUERILLAS WERE IN CEMETARY
WHY DIDN'T THEY MOVE IN SOONER AND WITH MORE FORCE? HOW DID THE
OTHER TERRORIST MANAGE TO ESCAPE INTO A PRESUMABLY HOSTILE CROWD?
WHAT REALLY WAS THEIR TARGET AND WHOSE PICTURES DID THEY CARRY?

ACCORDING TO RADIO REPORTS DEAD TERRORIST ALSO CARRIED HALF AN

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IRAQI DINAR, A MATCHBOX MADE IN BAGHDAD AND AN IDENTITY CARD
WITH THE PSEUDONYM AL AHAD 160. GOVERNMENT PRESS IN REPORTING

INCIDENT QUICKLY DECIDED SABATEURS WERE IRAQIS. THE SCANTY
EVIDENCE AVAILABLE SUGGEST THEY WERE IRAQIS BUT THERE IS
POSSIBILITY THEY WERE PALESTINIANS OR DISAFFECTED IRANIANS.
THEIR ATTEMPT SEEMS SO AMATEURISH AND POORLY PLANNED THAT IT IS
HARD TO BELIEVE THEY BELONGED TO A WELL ORGANIZED OR LARGE
TERRORIST GROUP. WE TOO ARE INCLINED TO PLAY DOWN AFFAIR AND
BELIEVE IT WAS AN ISOLATED INCIDENT AND NOT THE BEGINNINGS OF
A SYSTEMATIC TERRORIST CAMPAIGN IN KHUZISTAN.
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